

## VII. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following describes the Task Force and Advisory Group's recommendations in greater detail. Timelines and costs have been estimated for each recommendation. The estimated costs do not include costs associated with City staff time, but an estimation of the amount of City staff time required to do the work is provided.

### Recommendation 1 PRIMER



#### **Develop a local sustainable building Primer to serve as a common roadmap for public and private projects in Seattle.**

A large volume of information on sustainable building has already been produced by the City and other organizations. What is now needed is a simple document that is appropriate for Seattle, is acceptable to policy makers, and includes the following:

- A definition of sustainable building
- Benefits to the City government, the industry and community
- Principles of sustainable building
- Performance guidelines
- Information about City resources and incentive programs
- Case study summaries

As a tool to encourage developers and their teams to maximize resource efficiency, the primer needs to explain what sustainable building means, how it can be achieved, why the industry should do it, and how others have done it. The performance guidelines should be presented in an integrated manner to stress the importance of taking a holistic approach to design and construction. Also important is a description of how City incentive and technical assistance programs and other resources can help the industry meet the performance guidelines -- a roadmap to the ultimate destination.

#### ***Preferred Strategy***

Form a small subcommittee out of the Task Force (with a City staff member or BIRV staff<sup>5</sup> as the lead) to develop the Primer by researching existing information, drafting the document, and circulating it to the Task Force, Advisory Group and other key players for review. Provide some discretionary funds to hire a consultant to assist on the project if necessary. Have the Primer professionally

<sup>5</sup> The BIRV (Business and Industry Recycling Venture) is under contract with the Seattle Public Utilities to implement a variety of sustainable building programs. This task could be included in their scope of work.

edited and published. Recognize the Primer as a formal, public document by passing a City Council resolution, ordinance, or other appropriate decree.

Develop the Primer in hard copy form and produce a brochure to serve as an order form and promotional piece. In addition, include the Primer on the City's website and develop other resource-conserving means of distributing the Primer to the industry and general public.

*Timeline:* 6-8 months  
*Est. Cost:* \$10,000 (editing, printing, graphic design, distribution); \$5,000 (consultant)  
*City Staff:* 0.25 FTE (lead); 0.15 for 1-3 FTEs (subcommittee)

#### ***Alternative Strategy***

Hire a consultant to develop the Primer by researching existing information, drafting the document, and circulating it to the Task Force, Advisory Group and other key players for review. Professionally edit and publish the Primer. Have the City recognize the Primer as a formal, public document by passing a City Council resolution or other appropriate decree.

Develop the Primer in hard copy form and produce a brochure to serve as an order form and promotional piece. In addition, include the Primer on the City's website and develop other resource-conserving means of distributing the Primer to the industry and general public.

*Timeline:* 6-8 months  
*Est. Cost:* \$20,000 (consultant)  
*City Staff:* 0.10 FTE (proj mgr); 0.05 for 1-2 FTEs (oversight)

## **Recommendation 2 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY**

**Adopt a policy that would require all City of Seattle new construction and major renovation projects to be designed and built in a sustainable manner.**

One way to encourage the building industry to build more sustainably is to lead by example. Requiring that all new and renovated City buildings be sustainably designed sends a clear message of the City's support of and belief in these principles. It can also prove the cost-effectiveness of resource-efficient technologies to the industry. Adopting a sustainable building policy will also enable Seattle to be a national and international model in this field.

#### ***Preferred Strategy***

The City's Environmental Management Initiative (EMI) is in the process of developing a broad resource-efficient building policy. Members of the Task Force could assist the EMI in developing a City Council ordinance or other appropriate decree to require that all new City of Seattle construction projects meet the performance guidelines established in the Primer or existing criteria developed by other organizations. The City also needs to ensure that the policy is implemented and enforced by providing outreach and resources to City project teams.

#### Develop New Policy

*Timeline:* 6 months to draft, review and adopt the policy.  
*Est. Cost:* \$0.00  
*City Staff:* 0.10 FTE (lead); 0.05 for 1-2 FTEs (oversight)

#### Conduct Outreach to City Project Teams

*Timeline:* 6 months following development of the Primer  
*Est. Cost:* < \$1,000 to develop information packets (using existing resources, such as the Primer and incentive programs)  
*City Staff:* 0.15 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 1-2 FTEs (team)

### Recommendation 3 CODE REVIEW

**Review existing codes, regulations and other requirements that pertain to the building industry to identify those which conflict with sustainable building principles and to determine if any of the requirements can be modified to facilitate sustainable building.**

The building industry must comply with a tremendous amount of codes, regulations and other requirements, some which may be inconsistent with sustainable building practices. Some of these, however, are merely perceived but not real inconsistencies. For example, some argue that the City's low bid process is an impediment to hiring quality teams that would design and build more resource-efficient buildings. In fact, the City's bid process enables the inclusion of specific criteria, such as sustainable building elements, to ensure that the *best* and lowest bid is selected. Other codes may in fact be inconsistent with green building but may serve a purpose which overrides sustainable building goals. On the other hand, some conflicting codes may have outlived their usefulness.

### ***Preferred Strategy***

Form a small subcommittee composed of City staff to:

- Hire a consultant to conduct focus groups of key stakeholders in the building industry to identify the main regulatory barriers to sustainable building. Have one focus group composed of “green” architects and builders to determine the challenges they’ve faced and how they’ve been able to overcome regulatory obstacles.
- Have the consultant develop a simple questionnaire targeted at a larger audience in the building industry to identify the main regulatory barriers to sustainable building. Send the questionnaire via direct mail or include in DCLU’s newsletter.
- Compile the responses to the questionnaire and research the top barriers identified to determine which ones are real and which are only perceived to be conflicts. Resolve the perceived conflicts and include this information in a marketing campaign, as described in Recommendation 5. Evaluate the real conflicts and develop recommended changes where appropriate.

*Timeline:* 8-12 months  
*Est. Cost:* \$15,000 (consultant)  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.15 for 3 FTEs (oversight)

### ***Alternative Strategy***

Have City staff perform the work described in under the Preferred Strategy.

*Timeline:* 8-12 months  
*Est. Cost:* <\$1,000 (survey)  
*City Staff:* 0.25 FTE (lead); 0.20 for 3 FTEs (oversight)

## **Recommendation 4 RESOURCE CENTER**



### **Establish a one-stop-shopping resource center to meet local needs for use by the building industry and general public.**

Providing a locale where developers, designers, contractors, do-it-yourselfers, and others can access a variety of information about sustainable building is an item strongly recommended by the Task Force and Advisory Group. It can be extremely time consuming to research applicable codes, available products, design specifications, incentive programs, etc. because most of this information is widely dispersed throughout the City, nation, and the world. In addition, because there is so much available information, it is time-consuming to separate out the useful from the not-so-useful information.

Therefore, what is needed is a one-stop-shopping resource center that provides the latest, most relevant information, including:

- City and private sectors resources (e.g. City incentive programs, consultants, certification programs)
- Local case studies/projects information
- Codes pertaining to sustainable building
- Computer databases (e.g. product listings)
- Software/modeling programs
- Publications (e.g. books, magazines)
- Product samples/materials and literature
- Sample specifications/standards
- Knowledgeable staff to provide technical assistance/consultations

### ***Preferred Strategy***

The City of Seattle should take the lead in establishing a regional resource center(s) that involves, at a minimum, King County, and perhaps Snohomish and Pierce Counties. Support should also be solicited from trade organizations, such as Associated General Contractors and American Institute of Architects, and from other potential funding sources, such as grants. Because these trade organizations and the building industry as a whole do not confine their activities to the City of Seattle, a regional resource center is preferable to a City resource center.

The resource center could be phased in, starting with a small center with some of the key published information, software programs and product samples. Later, more resources, including staff, could be added. A staffed resource center offers an additional benefit of providing users with technical assistance on specific projects. Industry representatives have stated that this is a valuable way to facilitate green building efforts and to sell the idea to their clients.

The resource center should be located in an area which the building industry frequents, such as next to a building permit office. The Task Force recommends against locating the resource center in a permit office. Doing so would cause many in the industry to associate the resource center with the permit process, making it appear that green building is yet another requirement imposed by government. Although it would not be a required part of the permit process, the resource center would need to be coordinated with the permit process in order to prevent problems and facilitate implementation of sustainable building measures. For example, resource center staff who provide green building technical advice to design teams could also give advice

on how to work with building inspectors, design review boards and others in approving their plans.

The resource center could be a single, larger, centralized facility or a collection of smaller branches dispersed throughout the region, or a combination of the two.

#### Phase I - Smaller, Unstaffed Center(s)

*Timeline:* 1 year to establish  
*Est. Cost:* \$25,000 - 50,000 (resources, equipment) plus potential rental space and consultant fees<sup>6</sup>  
*City Staff:* 0.30 FTE (lead); 0.15 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

#### Phase II - Larger, Staffed Center(s)

*Timeline:* 1 year to establish  
*Est. Cost:* \$150,000+ (1-2 FTEs per site, overhead, supplies) plus potential rental space<sup>7</sup>  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

#### ***Alternative Strategies***

(1) Establish a City of Seattle resource center near the Department of Construction and Land Use, the Lighting Design Lab or other facility frequented by the building industry. Phase in the resource center as described in the Preferred Strategy, with the ultimate goal of having a staffed resource center.

#### Phase I - Smaller, Unstaffed Center

*Timeline:* 8-12 months to establish  
*Est. Cost:* \$25,000 - 50,000 (resources, equipment) plus potential rental space and consultant fees  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

#### Phase II - Larger, Staffed Center

*Timeline:* 1 year to establish  
*Est. Cost:* \$75,000 - 150,000 (1-2 FTEs per site, overhead, supplies) plus potential rental space  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)



(2) Establish a “virtual” resource center -- in other words, a web site containing many of the resources listed on the previous page. The disadvantages are that the amount of information that can be provided

<sup>6</sup> Costs will increase if more than one branch is established.

<sup>7</sup> Costs will increase if more than one branch is established.

via the internet is limited, and two-dimensional information is often not as beneficial as seeing and touching the real thing. Moreover, the US Green Building Council is in the process of developing a national virtual resource center on its site.

*Timeline:* 4-6 months to develop web site. Must be maintained and updated regularly.  
*Est. Cost:* \$0.00 (Use in-house Information Technology staff to provide technical assistance/consultation).  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

## Recommendation 5 EDUCATION

### **Conduct an education and outreach campaign to City staff and industry groups.**

Opportunities to provide education and outreach about sustainable building practices and technologies still abound. Over the past few years, the City has provided technical assistance to the building industry and offered a variety of workshops. These types of efforts are effective and should continue. In addition, the City needs to educate itself by providing workshops or other educational forums to appropriate staff, such as building inspectors, utility staff, and housing officials. One common complaint voiced by the industry is the lack of familiarity of green building practices and technologies by building inspectors and examiners. As a result, some ideas fail to receive approval and thus are not implemented.

#### ***Preferred Strategy***

Form a small subcommittee of City staff to develop an interdepartmental, integrated workplan to conduct educational forums to appropriate City staff, industry groups (eg. trade organizations), and design teams working on specific projects. Solicit ideas for this plan from the industry. The plan should determine who will conduct the forums (such as a consultant), the structure and content of the forums, and funding mechanisms. Then implement the education workplan.

#### **Phase I - Develop Integrated Education Workplan**

*Timeline:* 2-3 months  
*Est. Cost:* \$0.00  
*City Staff:* 0.10 FTE (lead); 0.05 for 3-4 FTEs (oversight)

#### **Phase II - Implement the Workplan**

*Timeline:* 1-2 years  
*Est. Cost:* \$10,000+  
*City Staff:* unknown

**Recommendation 6  
INCENTIVES**

done by reducing

**Integrate and streamline current City incentive programs and consider offering new incentive programs.**

In order for incentive programs to be as effective as possible, they first need to be easily accessible and user-friendly. Currently, many incentive programs are dispersed among various City departments and some require a significant amount of paperwork. The City needs to provide one-stop-shopping for existing incentive programs (via DCLU or the resource center, for example) and ensure that the programs are efficiently administered. This can be

the turnaround time and the paperwork involved.

In addition to integrating current programs, the City should also examine the idea of providing new incentive programs for developers as well as other team members, such as designers and contractors. The following are examples of the kinds of incentives which the City may want to look at:

- Include sustainable building in existing development bonuses programs;
- Provide green utility rates to building owners that conserve resources;
- Provide designers with a portion of savings from decreased utility bills;
- Ensure that sustainable building projects will not take any longer to be approved in the permitting process.

***Preferred Strategy***

Form a small subcommittee of City staff to review existing City incentive and technical assistance programs regarding energy efficiency, water conservation, and solid waste to determine if any could be streamlined. Integrate the programs into a single incentives package. Tailor the packages to specific project types, such as a commercial projects package. Make the package available through the permit office, resource center or other convenient location that the building industry frequents. Also make the package, or information about it, available on a web site. Ensure that all City staff delivering programs are constantly aware of each others' programs. Perhaps hold an annual meeting to share information.

Research the practicality and desirability of offering new incentive programs. Seek input from the building industry on these issues. Develop a set of proposals based on that research and submit to City policy makers.

Streamline Existing Programs

*Timeline:* 4-6 months  
*Est. Costs:* \$0 - 5,000 (redesign, reprint)  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

Research New Programs

*Timeline:* 4-6 months  
*Est. Costs:* \$0.00  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

***Alternative Strategy***

Use City staff to develop a list of incentive programs with contact information and make the list available through the permit office, resource center or other convenient location that the building industry frequents. Also make the list available on a web site.

Hire a consultant to research the practicality and desirability of offering new incentive programs, with input from the building industry and City staff. Develop a set of proposals based on that research and submit to the City.

Develop Resource List

*Timeline:* 1-2 months  
*Est. Costs:* <\$1,000 (printing)  
*City Staff:* 0.10 FTE (lead); 0.05 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

Research New Programs

*Timeline:* 6 months  
*Est. Costs:* \$10,000 - 15,000 (consultant)  
*City Staff:* 0.10 FTE (lead); 0.05 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

## Recommendation 7 MARKETING CAMPAIGN



**Develop a marketing strategy and launch a campaign to increase consumer demand, to educate the industry about sustainable building and to publicize the Primer, the Resource Center, educational forums, incentive programs, and other services and programs.**

Once the Primer and Resource Center have been established, the City should promote both of these as a way to educate the building industry about sustainable building in general, and the performance guidelines in particular. Furthermore, the City should promote other City programs and services, such as the educational forums and incentive programs. The City should target the general public to increase consumer demand for green building services and products, and it should target other groups, such as financial companies, to raise awareness. In doing all this, the City should coordinate with other groups that are also undertaking marketing efforts, such as trade associations or environmental programs. The City may be able to secure some funding from suppliers and service providers.

In developing its marketing campaign, the City should develop a logo, slogan and professional identify as a means of creating a “brand” for sustainable building. Ideas include:

- Press releases; public service announcements; advertisements
- Articles in trade newsletters, home and garden magazines
- Direct mail to targeted audiences
- Presentations to industry groups and students

### ***Preferred Strategy***

Hire a consultant to create a brand (logo, slogan) for sustainable building, develop a marketing plan, develop other tools to implement the plan (such as brochures), and carry out the plan.

#### Branding Exercise

*Timeline:* 6-8 months  
*Est. Cost:* \$10,000 - 20,000 (consultant)  
*City Staff:* 0.10 FTE (proj mgr); 0.05 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

#### Develop and Implement Marketing Plan

*Timeline:* 6-8 months to develop a marketing campaign  
*Est. Cost:* \$25,000 (consultant, advertising, etc.)  
*City Staff:* 0.15 FTE (proj mgr); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

### *Alternative Strategy*

Use City staff (City graphic designers, public relations staff, etc.) to conduct the work.

*Timeline:* 6-8 months to develop a marketing campaign  
*Est. Cost:* \$10,000 - 15,000 (graphics, printing)  
*City Staff:* 0.20 for 2 FTEs (lead and PR staff); 0.10 for 2-3 FTE (oversight)

## Recommendation 8 AWARDS



### **Recognize outstanding green projects and continue to provide the information on sustainable building through an annual or biennial conference and awards event.**

One incentive that helps generate and maintain interest in sustainable building is to recognize outstanding projects and achievements. An awards program for some of the top green projects and companies could be part of a large annual or biennial conference, workshop or other educational event. Public recognition provides designers, developers, contractors and other companies with a marketing tool and competitive edge. Providing the latest sustainable building information in a conference-like setting is another effective tool in generating interest and enthusiasm. Showcasing award-winning sustainable building in local architectural and home magazines and other print media provides an additional benefit of generating broad public awareness.

### *Preferred Strategy*

Piggy-back and expand the scope of an existing conference/workshop/awards program, such as the Architecture and Engineering Awards. Send out press releases and write articles showcasing award-winning projects.

Every two years, provide a day of sustainable design and construction workshops and seminars, along with an awards ceremony for the building industry, both public and private sectors. Ensure good publicity and high visibility for the event.

*Timeline:* 6 months to plan, develop, and publicize a one-day conference and awards event.  
*Est. Cost:* \$50,000 - 75,000  
*City Staff:* 0.25 FTE (lead); 0.15 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

### *Alternative Strategy*

Repeat the Sustainable Building Northwest Conference every 3 years and include an awards ceremony. This was a 3-day regional event sponsored by the City in 1997 that some 500 people attended. During off-years, offer an awards ceremony only.

#### Conference and Awards

*Timeline:* 1 year to plan, develop, and publicize  
*Est. Cost:* \$150,000 - 200,000  
*City Staff:* 0.25 FTE (lead); 0.15 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

#### Awards Only

*Timeline:* 3 months to plan, develop, and publicize  
*Est. Cost:* \$10,000  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 2-3 FTEs (oversight)

## Recommendation 9 EVALUATION



### **Evaluate and update the performance guidelines outlined in the Sustainable Building Primer every two years.**

Building technologies, products and regulations change constantly. To keep up with these changes, the performance guidelines in the Sustainable Building Primer should be evaluated and modified every other year. This will enable Seattle to continually raise the bar and stay in the forefront of sustainable building efforts. In time, sustainable building may become part of the normal course of doing business and the performance guidelines and other City programs may no longer be necessary.

#### ***Preferred Strategy***

Every two years (or as long as necessary), form a small committee comprised of public and private sector representatives (with a City staff as the lead) to review the performance guidelines and propose changes. Have a larger group of key stakeholders review and comment on the recommendations; perhaps tying in with the biennial conference as described in Recommendation 8. Formally adopt the changes and professionally edit and publish the new Primer. Promote and distribute the Primer to the building industry, per Recommendation 7.

Have the committee also evaluate the City's sustainable building programs and services and propose changes to the scope of work, with review from the larger group.

*Timeline:* 4-6 months

*Est. Cost:* <\$5,000 (reprint Primer)  
*City Staff:* 0.20 FTE (lead); 0.10 for 1-2 FTEs (oversight)

***Alternative Strategy***

Hire a consultant to review the Primer, make recommended changes, circulate for review, edit and publish. Use City staff to evaluate the current scope of work and propose changes.

*Timeline:* 2-3 months to review, propose and adopt changes to the performance guidelines and to evaluate the City's scope of work. 1-2 months to publish and distribute Primer.

*Timeline:* 4-6 months  
*Est. Cost:* \$10,000 (consultant, printing)  
*City Staff:* 0.10 FTE (proj mgr); 0.05 for 1-2 FTEs (oversight)